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Tab C

Current Developments in Kampuchea

Status of Fighting. Vietnamese military forces between November 1981 and May 1982 carried out their most successful dry season campaign in Kampuchea, but were unable to destroy the resistance. For the first time they threatened major Democratic Kampuchea (DK) strongholds, and kept the two major non-Communist resistance groups—former Kampuchean Premier Son Sann's Khmer People's National Liberation Front (KPNLF) and Prince Sihanouk's Moulinaka—off balance. []

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The DK was dislodged from numerous border positions and prevented from expanding operations in the interior, as it had in the past dry seasons. The US Embassy believes the number of casualties among the DK's estimated 35,000 troops totalled perhaps more than 1,000. []

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The Vietnamese easily overran the KPNLF's most effective base in southwestern Kampuchea. The KPNLF's 7-8,000 troops, however, largely avoided casualties. Sihanouk's small (less than 1,000 troops) resistance group was kept on the defensive by periodic ground probes and artillery shellings. []

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With the rainy season in its third month, the 180,000 Vietnamese forces in Kampuchea are doing less well, but their main forward positions along the Thai-Kampuchea border are not threatened and there are no prospects of the resistance making major territorial gains. []

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Hanoi appears to be in a good position to contain the resistance when the dry season resumes in November, but there will be no quick end to the conflict. []

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Coalition Developments. After more than a year of protracted negotiations, the three resistance factions in late June signed an agreement to form the Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea (CGDK). By the terms of the agreement the CGDK will be a loose structure with the members obligated only to work for Vietnam's withdrawal from Kampuchea and to provide for free elections as called for by the UN General Assembly and by the International Conference on Kampuchea. All major decisions are to be by consensus; each faction retains its separate military forces. []

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ASEAN, which had long sought the establishment of a resistance coalition government, plans to use the coalition as a vehicle to strengthen the KPNLF militarily. []

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Although the coalition agreement may facilitate some closer cooperation, it papers over sharply conflicting policy aims of the resistance factions and the strategic goals of their backers. ASEAN and Son Sann believe that formation of the coalition buys time to increase the Front's credibility to strengthen their hand for eventual negotiations with Hanoi. China and the DK want a long term military conflict that wears down the Vietnamese and forces them to withdraw from Kampuchea. Sihanouk, lacking military and political resources, will use the coalition to increase his influence over developments concerning Kampuchea. [REDACTED]

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There is deep bitterness between troops loyal to the DK and those of the other resistance factions and small-scale clashes will persist. At the top levels, there is animosity and distrust among the leaders of the resistance forces, and disputes among them could quickly destroy the fragile coalition. [REDACTED]

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